

## Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 MANAGU 05520 011343Z

42

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OES-06 AGRE-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00

EB-07 FRB-01 INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-15 TRSE-00 XMB-04

OPIC-06 SP-02 CIEP-02 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 PA-02

PRS-01 ARAE-00 /075 W

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P R 302227Z NOV 76

FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1707

INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MEXICO CITY

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR PRIORITY

AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

UNCLAS MANAGUA 5520

GUATEMALA ALSO FOR ROCAP

SAN SALVADOR ALSO FOR AGRATT

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: EAGR, EPAP, ETRD, NU

SUBJECT: PRESENCE OF COFFEE RUST CONFIRMED IN NICARAGUA

BEGIN SUMMARY: EXISTENCE OF COFFEE RUST BLIGHT IN NICARAGUA HAS BEEN CONFIRMED. AGRICULTURE MINISTER MARSHALLING ALL AVAILABLE LOCAL RESOURCES TO SUPPRESS THIS DISEASE WHICH COULD SERIOUSLY HARM NICARAGUA'S SECOND MOST IMPORTANT EXPORT CROP. HE IS ALSO ENLISTING SUPPORT OF OTHER CENTRAL AMERICAN COUNTRIES, MEXICO AND BRAZIL. SPREAD OF BLIGHT TO OTHER CENTRAL AMERICAN COUNTRIES COULD ADVERSELY AFFECT ECONOMY OF ENTIRE REGION. END SUMMARY.

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PAGE 02 MANAGU 05520 011343Z

1. IN NOVEMBER 30 PRES CONFERENCE, AGRICULTURE MINISTER SENGELMANN

DISCLOSED THAT PRESENCE OF COFFEE RUST FUNGUS (ROYA -- HEMILEIA VASTATRIX) HAD BEEN CONFIRMED PREVIOUS DAY. SAID AREA AFFECTED COVERS 56 MANZANAS (ABOUT 95 ACRES) IN JINOTEPE REGION OF CARAZO DEPARTMENT, SOUTH OF MANAGUA. ADDED THAT IMMEDIATE STEPS ARE BEING TAKEN TO QUARANTINE THAT AREA SO AS TO PREVENT SPREAD OF DISEASE.

2. WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING SERIOUSNESS OF THIS BLIGHT, SENGELMANN SOUGHT TO ASSURE COFFEE GROWERS AND PUBLIC THAT GON ON TOP OF SITUATION AND THAT THERE NO NEED TO PANIC. TO BUTTRESS HIS REMARKS, HE HAD PRESIDENTS OF CENTRAL AND NATIONAL BANKS AS WELL AS EXPERTS ON PLANT DISEASE AND REPRESENTATIVE OF COFFEE GROWERS ON HAND. STEPS TO BE TAKEN INCLUDE: --QUARANTINE OF AFFLICTED AREA, INCLUDING TOTAL BAN ON MOVEMENT OF VEGETAL MATTER INTO OR OUT OF AREA. --MASSIVE FUMIGATION OF 200-300 MANZANAS AROUND BLIGHTED PLANTATIONS. --OFFER OF UNRESTRICTED FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO COFFEE GROWERS TO COMBAT DISEASE AND FOR REPLANTING WHERE NECESSARY.

--SEARCH OF OTHER COFFEE GROWING REGIONS TO ISOLATE ANY OTHER OUTBREAKS OF RUST WHICH MIGHT OCCUR.

3. SENGELMANN URGED THAT ALL ELEMENTS COOPERATE WITH GON'S EFFORTS TO STEM BLIGHT'S SPREAD AND INDICATED NEW LEGISLATION UNDER CONSIDERATION TO COMPEL FARMERS TO TAKE STRINGENT MEASURES TO CONTROL DISEASE. HE WARNED, HOWEVER, THAT NO QUARANTINE CAN BE GUARANTEED TO BE COMPLETELY EFFECTIVE AND SAID DRASTIC MEASURES MAY PROVE NECESSARY TO SUPPRESS DISEASE.

4. HE NOTED THAT, ALTHOUGH DISEASE DOES NOT AFFECT COFFEE BEANS AND CURRENT EXPORT CROP NOW BEING HARVESTED WILL BE LITTLE AFFECTED, FUTURE PRODUCTION COULD SUFFER APPRECIABLY IF CONTAINMENT EFFORTS FAIL. HE NOTED THAT LOCAL COFFEE INSTITUTE (INCAFE) ESTIMATES THAT NICARAGUA SHOULD HAVE AVAILABLE FOR EXPORT DURING CURRENT 1976/77 CROP YEAR ROUGHLY ONE MILLION BAGS OF COFFEE. (COMMENT: THIS FIGURE EXCEEDS ESTIMATES WE OBTAINED LAST MONTH FROM INDUSTRY SOURCES WHO THOUGH 1976/77 EXPORTS WOULD TOTAL ABOUT 850,000 BAGS).

5. THE MINISTER SAID OIRSA (CENTRAL AMERICAN AGRICULTURAL PEST CONTROL ORGANIZATION) HAS BEEN ALERTED AND THAT CIRSA (CENTRAL AMERICAN MINISTERS OF AGRICULTURE) WOULD BE CONVOKED SO THAT A UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03     MANAGU 05520 011343Z

COORDINATED EFFORT CAN BE UNDERTAKEN TO PREVENT SPREAD OF RUST TO OTHER CA COUNTRIES. ADDED THAT MEXICAN AND BRAZILIAN GOVERNMENTS WILL BE ASKED TO ASSIST.

7. COMMENTS: SENGELMANN APPEARS TO HAVE DONE SUPERB JOB IN HANDLING ANNOUNCEMENT OF THIS SERIOUS PROBLEM, DEMONSTRATING HIS EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITIES. WHETHER COOPERATION OF COFFEE GROWERS, AND PICKERS, HEALTH OFFICIALS, FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS,

AND GENERAL PUBLIC CAN BE EFFECTIVELY ORCHESTRATED, HOWEVER,  
IS MOOT. NONETHELESS, HE APPARENTLY HAS BACKING OF PRESIDENT SOMOZA  
IN USING ALL AVAILABLE RESOURCES. AT STAKE IS NICARAGUA'S MOST  
IMPORTANT FOREIGN EXCHANGE EARNER AFTER COTTON. GIVEN EVEN LOWER  
ESTIMATE OF EXPORTS FROM CURRENT CROP, COFFEE SHOULD EARN NICARAGUA  
MORE THAN \$120 MILLION IN 1977, OR WELL OVER 20 PERCENT OF EXPECTED  
TOTAL EXPORTS. COFFEE, OF COURSE, NOT ONLY IMPORT FOREIGN EXCHANGE  
EARNER FOR NICARAGUA, BUT FOR ALL CENTRAL AMERICA. HENCE, SUCCESS  
OR FAILURE OF SENNELMANN'S EFFORTS COULD AFFECT ECONOMY OF  
ENTIRE REGION.  
RUBENSTEIN

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## Message Attributes

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**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 30 NOV 1976  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** n/a  
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**TAGS:** EAGR, EPAP, ETRD, NU  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006